

3/15/2023

MN State Senator Ron Latz
MN House Representative Sandra Feist

Subject: Support of Legislation SF997/HF7019

It has been long overdue to have damages awarded for injury, pain and suffering on behalf of a loved one. These loved ones are many times neglected by Long Term Care Facility (LTCF) workers that often times cause physical injury, or worst case, death due to lack of care, understaffing and undertraining.

These LTCFs need to be held responsible and accountable. How many injuries and deaths do we have to endure before changes in elder care happens? We need to protect our vulnerable, aging population within our communities. We will all be there before we know it, and that thought scares me every day.

My father was in a LTCF because my mother had severe Alzheimer's and my dad did not want to be without her. My father had little dementia and was physically and mentally in good shape. I initially felt reassured knowing that when I wasn't there, he could give me an update on my mother.

I visited my dad and mom almost every day, and when I didn't, I talked to him daily by phone. One week before my dad died, he called me late at night to tell me that my mom was sick with a cold and was coughing. To my shock, on the phone, I heard her caregiver screaming and swearing at my dad to get off the phone. She didn't realize that the call was already finished but I was still on the other end. I went to the LTCF Executive Director at 8 am with a signed document stating that I never wanted that care worker to provide care to my dad or mom again; I was Power of Attorney and Health Care Directive point of contact for my parents. I was assured this person would not be involved in my parents', or other residents, care again. One week later this same care worker was taking care of my dad, the night before his death when he was deathly sick. I never got a call.

One day in 2014, I arrived early (9:30 am) to find my dad sitting in a chair with tears in his eyes, in a low voice screaming "Help!" over and over. No care worker was paying attention to him at all. I was informed the nurse had checked him out and had said he was ok. I found my dad's stomach extremely extended and huge (10x size); he was a slim man at 5'8" and 163 pounds.

My dad had a hernia, and the LTCF previously knew this fact. I had it checked every three months when I took him to his doctor. The doctor stated there was a slim chance it could become incarcerated, and he instructed me on the signs to look for, which I passed on to the care workers. The doctor also instructed me to immediately call 911 if these signs were ever present, and that my dad would have perhaps a twelve-hour window of time before his affected tissues would die off and death would occur.

Later, I also found out I my dad had been vomiting feces during the night and was very sick, which was initially hidden from me, and no one had called me. While at the LTCF, I called an ambulance that morning to attend to my father. The LTCF Executive Director never knew what was going on, even though the ambulance was ten feet from his large office window.

The doctor at the hospital said my dad was otherwise in good enough physical health that they could operate, however he also believed my dad wouldn't make it thorough surgery because too much time had passed and too much tissue had died. My dad was in terrible pain; I never want to see anyone like that again. The hospital intubated my dad, and he died five hours later. I live with this horror every day, one that no one should ever have to endure with a parent or loved one. The doctor told me this is one of the most painful ways to die. In my mind, my dad was murdered by the LTCF negligence. Their lack of care and attention to this condition led to his immediate death.

My dad paid a lot of money for the healthcare that failed him and ultimately lead to his painful, and negligent death.

Please vote to award damages for pain and suffering so these LTCF take notice and make much needed improvements and other changes for the benefit of the elderly residents who don't have a voice. They have given so much to the communities in their lives, and it is time for us to take care of them.

Sincerely,

Joannie Maurer
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